



## MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

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### *MHCC 16-012*

### *"Data Management and Analytic Support for The Maryland Medical Care Data Base" Questions and Responses #3*

1. **Question:** For purposes of being prepared for a live demonstration of the solution, will offerors be given access to a reading library? If the answer is yes, when will that access be given?

**Answer:** An RFP amendment will be posted by close of business on Tuesday, December 29 containing information about accessing a reading library. Prospective bidders are advised to monitor this website for ongoing updates and amendments:  
[MHCC.Maryland.Gov\\_Procurement](http://MHCC.Maryland.Gov_Procurement).

2. **Question:** How is the current ETL process managed (SSIS packages, stored procedures, other ETL tool)? How many interfaces/procedures/steps are in the current process?

**Answer:** Offerors must provide the system functionality described in Section 3.4 "Solution Requirements" et. seq. An RFP amendment will be posted by close of business on Tuesday, December 29 containing information about accessing a reading library. Prospective bidders are advised to monitor this website for ongoing updates and amendments: [MHCC.Maryland.Gov\\_Procurement](http://MHCC.Maryland.Gov_Procurement)

3. **Question:** What information needs to be included in this section? Can the offeror refer to other sections of the proposal detailing past performance, or should this section contain information that may be in other parts of the proposal?

**Answer:** The Offerer must meet the Minimum Qualifications in order for the proposal to move forward into the full evaluation process.

4. **Question:** Page 36, Section 2.1.7 – Is Maryland looking for two past project that are 10 years in duration or two project references that began in the years 2001 through 2006 or both?

**Answer:** The Offeror should demonstrate that it has continuously provided similar services for at least the most recent 10 years, unless otherwise noted. In this section, the Offeror should provide at least two specific examples of projects with services similar to those in this RFP. The engagements may be for any duration during the 10 year window. Project examples need not be in continuous operation for 10 years and may overlap.

5. **Question:** Page 36, Section 2.1.7 – If this requirement is for 10 years of continuous service, can this be met by one 10 year project and overlapping shorter term projects that span 10 years?

**Answer:** Yes. Also, see the answer above for further detail.

6. **Question:** Do the five (5) years of experience asked for in this section have to be projects that are compliant with State AND federal rules, or would projects compatible with only federal regulations be acceptable?

**Answer:** This requirement may be met by projects demonstrating compliance with federal rules and statute regarding secure management, storage, and release of HIPAA protected data.

7. **Question:** Page 36, Section 2.2 - To what extent are Key Personnel expected or required to work on site or in the state of Maryland?

**Answer:** Key Personnel are not expected to work on-site at MHCC offices or within the state of Maryland. Key Personnel should plan to attend the project kickoff meeting, at a minimum, and plan for at least one annual on-site visit.

8. **Question:** Can Key Personnel be dedicated consultants of the contractor?

**Answer:** Only direct hire personnel, who are dedicated resources to the firm, will be considered as part of the prime. Independent consultants will be considered a sub-contractor.

9. **Question:** Are there new payer/lob data files expected to be added in MCDB in the next year(s)?

**Answer:** At this time, one new data submitter has been identified in 2016.

10. **Question:** On page 41, it says that Qualified Vision Plans (QVP) must submit data to the MCDB, but it is not listed in Table 2 on the same page that specifies the data submissions by reporting entity. Will QVPs continue to be required to submit to the MCDB?

**Answer:** Qualified Vision Plans are not currently required to submit data to MCDB.

11. **Question:** How long does the current ETL process take?

**Answer:** Offerors should reference the Milestone Schedules in sections 3.4.6 and 3.4.7 for the requirements of the new system under this procurement.

12. **Question:** Does the current data submission portal perform any consistency checking on submissions? What are these checks and do they respond to submitters in (near) real-time?

**Answer:** Examples of Tier 1 and Tier 2 validation checks are included in Appendix C.

13. **Question:** What type of authentication do submitters use? Do they use person-specific user names or do they get a submitter-level user?

**Answer:** Under the current system, the data vendor assigns an organization identifier with person specific user names.

14. **Question:** 3.2.3.3 - Understanding that only 2014-2015 data are stored in a database now, but the historical data 2010-2015 is in SAS format, would it be a requirement for the new MCDB to include all years 2010-2015 (depending on LOB) and new incremental data in the SQL database?

**Answer:** Section 3.4.2.11.2 describes the SAS files that the vendor will need to load.

15. **Question:** 3.2.3.1 - Understanding the existing portal has to be imported in the new solution “as is,” would it be a requirement that any enhancement has to be incorporated in the existing portal? For instance, say a vendor has a metadata solution or a better data completion report, will these components have to be integrated seamlessly in the existing portal (SSO, security, stylesheets, etc.)?

**Answer:** MHCC expects that the Portal to be the interface, but is open to discussion about additions and enhancements.

16. **Question:** 3.2.3.1 - Is there a Data Request functionality in the existing Portal that keeps track of requests, approvals, and completion/delivery?

**Answer:** The existing portal does not have that capacity. MHCC is open to discussion about additions and enhancements.

17. **Question:** 3.2.3.1 - The data quality reports that exist in the portal, are these online BI reports that submitters can browse or static Excel downloadable files?

**Answer:** The files are static downloadable Excel files.

18. **Question:** 3.2.3.2-3.2.3.5 - Should the vendor use the same technologies SQL Server, SSIS, SSRS and SAS to continue the MCDB or is the state open to other software?

**Answer:** MHCC is open to other software, but must be able to access the data using SAS in the enclave environment. MHCC is open to discussion about additions and enhancements.

19. **Question:** Total Data Volumes Over Time - Page 44 refers to 17 terabytes total data. However, the basis of this is unclear. a. Does this include only data or does it also include indexes?

**Answer:** The 17TB estimate includes staging, ODS, DW and files stored in the enclave.

20. **Question:** Total Data Volumes Over Time - b. Does this include RAID, and if so, what level?

**Answer:** Yes, The 17TB estimate includes RAID Level 5.

21. **Question:** Total Data Volumes Over Time - c. What is the growth over the life of the project? That is, can the state estimate the total data volume in terabytes that will be required in this solution at each year-end of the project so we can see the anticipated data space growth required over the life of the entire project? (There is no need for index or temporary spaces; the volume of data to be loaded will be fine.)

**Answer:** Offerors should base estimates on a 4TB growth in file storage requirements per year.

22. **Question:** Standardized Software Tools - Does the State have standardized software they expect the vendor to use for activities such as Analytical Modeling, Business Intelligences Reporting and ETL (extract, transform and load)? If so, please advise what these tools are, i.e. vendor, product name, and release.

**Answer:** Offerors should review sections 3.4.3.1 and 3.4.3.6 for information on required and desired software tools.

23. **Question:** Aside from HIPAA compliance, are there any other security standards required for this proposal (FIPS 104-2, CMS Acceptable Risk Safeguards, FedRAMP)?

**Answer:** The Offeror should review section 3.5.6 and will be expected to meet CMS requirements for a Medicare Data Custodian.

24. **Question:** Backup and Recovery (BAR) - Does the state have an existing BAR system or vendor that we should plan to integrate with? If so, please describe the BAR solution software and hardware and the BAR vendor name.

**Answer:** No, the state does not have a preferred vendor.

25. **Question:** Backup and Recovery (BAR) - Does the state want to use backup-to-disk technology, or tape media, or both?

**Answer:** Either is acceptable.

26. **Question:** Is the Portal source code that will be provided as a part of the transition compatible with Non-visual access requirements for the State?

**Answer:** No, the Portal is used only by data submitters to load files and retrieve data quality reports and is not accessible to the general public.

27. **Question:** Page 52, Section 3.4.1.1.10.ii - For transition planning, what is the current size of raw data archive? What is the size of the current production-ready processed data?

**Answer:** As shown in Table 3, Section 3.2.3.3., the combined total current database size is 17 TB.

28. **Question:** Page 52, Section 3.4.1.1.10.iii – Explain what the 6/30 date means? Does that mean the incumbent is no longer obligated to provide transition support after 6/30? We understand the contract end date is 6/30. Is there an accommodation for Transition-Out beyond 6/30?

**Answer:** The Current MCDB Data Vendor is obligated to assist with transition activities through June 30, 2016. MHCC expects that the Offeror will be able to assume full responsibility for operations on July 1, 2016.

29. **Question:** During the pre-bid conference it was reiterated by MHCC that the evaluations and subsequent award will be completed very soon by Feb' 2016 (on a very aggressive schedule). If say, the awardee is company A, who is not the incumbent, will the NTP be a date in March/April 2016? If so, will MHCC be cancelling the existing contract (incumbent contract that is due to expire on 6/30/2016) by March/April 2016; 2/3 months early to allow company A start the work under the new contract?

**Answer:** The Current MCDB Data Vendor is obligated to assist with transition activities through June 30, 2016. MHCC expects that the Offeror will be able to assume full responsibility for operations on July 1, 2016.

30. **Question:** 3.4.2.5 Medicaid MCO - Are the file formats from the Hilltop Institute only available in SAS format?

**Answer:** Yes, this is the current practice.

31. **Question:** 3.4.2.13.1-2 - What is the required involvement of the vendor to develop and create the HSCRC or PI report(s)?

**Answer:** The Contractor is required to collaborate with HSCRC, MHCC and MIA to design the contents of these extracts.

32. **Question:** 3.4.2.14 - For the additional value added components, will MHCC provide licenses or does the vendor have to procure all of them?

**Answer:** The state will make the decision based on the pricing for the licenses; Attachment F requests pricing for the service and software separately and the state will make a decision.

33. **Question:** 3.4.2.2.8 Value Added Components - CDPS/CCS/NDC/MSDRG/BETOS/NPPES – does the current model incorporate these groupings in the transactional data at the claim line level or are separate feeds created to be consumed?

**Answer:** The value adds occur at the claim level.

34. **Question:** 3.4.2.2.8 Value Added Components - please elaborate “generating flags in the data” – does this refer to flagging claims for ER, Readmission, Complication events, etc.?

**Answer:** Yes, this requirement refers to flags that facilitate analysis and segmenting the data in order to make queries more efficient. This would include the flags cited.

35. **Question:** 3.4.2.14 - Will both ECR/HCI3 and the alternative episode groupers be required or just one of them?

**Answer:** The state is exploring these options and will be making a decision during the course of the contract.

36. **Question:** 3.4.2.2.8 Value Added Components - Is the current claim versioning process standard for all payers or does it vary by payer?

**Answer:** The current approach uses a standard process with exceptions for certain payers.

37. **Question:** Load Volume - What is the projected load volume (in MB or GB) and what is the frequency of these loads (daily, weekly, monthly)? We need this to establish the correct speed of connectivity.

**Answer:** The deadline is quarterly but files are submitted throughout the submission period. Individual file sizes vary from less than 1G to about 10G.

38. **Question:** Time Service Level Goals - The RFP uses the term “real time” on page 212. Can the state stipulate an acceptable lag time for introducing data into the system from the various source systems?

**Answer:** This question references information in Attachment Q, Labor Categories, containing position descriptions that are provided as a reference for Offerors when completing their bids. Offerors should review Section 3.4 for information about the solution requirements for this project.

39. **Question:** Extract Files - Will the State provide extract files from their legacy systems in a mutually agreed upon format where these files are accessible on the network or will the vendor have access to these systems in order to build the extracts?

**Answer:** The Contractor will receive data extracts in the current format and is responsible for converting or transferring the files into its system.

40. **Question:** Page 55, Section 3.4.2.2.10 - Does end of the processing 45-day cycle specified in 3.4.2.2.10 signify delivery to QA or a final approved production data warehouse? If the latter – what is the data expected for QA/Acceptance?

**Answer:** The 45-day cycle refers to final approved production data warehouse delivery, including robust quality assurance processes, to be described by the Offeror and as accepted by MHCC.

41. **Question:** Page 55, Section 3.4.2.2.9 - Would a proposed alternative to the current CRISP/UUID Master Patient Index solution be considered as part of the baseline offering or priced out separately?

**Answer:** MHCC requires the continuation of the CRISP/UUID process and is open to discussion about additions and enhancements.

42. **Question:** Page 58, Section 3.4.2.11.2 - How far back does the new contractor have to go with respect to migration of historic data?

**Answer:** As shown in Table 3, Section 3.2.3.3., data files since 2010 must be migrated.

43. **Question:** Page 59, Section 3.4.2.14 - Should the price estimates for Additional Value-Added Components (3.4.2.14) include licensing to re-distribution?

**Answer:** The price estimates should show any cost that will be incurred by MHCC for its use and analysis and upon the release of data extracts and reports to external, non-state-agency users.

44. **Question:** Page 55, Section 3.4.2.2.10 - Is there a data submission cutoff for all submitters (uniformly) which is approved by MD that would start the 45-day processing cycle specified in 3.4.2.2.10?

**Answer:** Offerors are responsible for working with data submitters to achieve timely submissions and meet the 45 day processing cycle timeline outlined in this RFP. Offerors should reference the Milestone Schedules in sections 3.4.6 and 3.4.7 for the requirements of the new system under this procurement as well as the Data Submission Manual ([www.mhcc.maryland.gov/mcdb.html](http://www.mhcc.maryland.gov/mcdb.html)) for information on submission requirements.

45. **Question:** Page 55, Section 3.4.2.2.9 - Is there a Master Provider Index solution in place – and if not should it be priced out as a separate option?

**Answer:** This is a core reporting requirement (3.4.3.3.2) and should be included in the overall cost.

46. **Question:** Page 55, Section 3.4.2.3.1 - If there is a need/request to onboard more than five submitters in a quarter (3.4.2.3.1) – what is the fee schedule?

**Answer:** The Offeror may propose a fee schedule for onboarding more than five submitters in a quarter.

47. **Question:** Page 55, Section 3.4.2.3.1 - If there is a need/request to support more than 100 total submitters (3.4.2.3.1) – what is the fee schedule?

**Answer:** The Offeror may propose a fee schedule for more than 100 submitters.

48. **Question:** Will offerors be given a file layout of the Hilltop-generated Medicaid MCO files as a part of this RFP?

**Answer:** The Medicaid file format is nearly the same as the commercial file format. The intake process for the Medicaid file should be similar to that used for commercial files.

49. **Question:** Page 55, NOTE - Should the "NOTE:..." on p.55 be referencing 3.4.2.2.8 from previous section (Enhances the data by adding the following value added components:) and not 3.4.2.3.8 (Make the most current version of the MCDB DSM available via the Portal)? Please clarify.

**Answer:** Yes, the correct reference is 3.4.2.2.8

50. **Question:** **Question 12:** The RFP states “NOTE: Tasks 3.4.2.2.1 – 3.4.2.2.7 are automated processes which already exist within the current ETL System environment and which may be leveraged by the Contractor. In addition, the Current MCDB Data Vendor performs Task 3.4.2.3.8 in SAS and then manually loads the data into the Data Warehouse, although this process shall be automated in the Contractor’s proposed System solution. Is the above reference Task 3.4.2.3.8 supposed to be Task 3.4.2.2.8? If so, please explain the level of automation expected by MHCC for activities A–H under 3.4.2.2.8, and clarify what is considered manually loaded and therefore unacceptable in the Data Warehouse.

**Answer:** Yes, the correct reference is 3.4.2.2.8 . MHCC expects that the activities listed in 3.4.2.2.8 will be built into the ETL process.

51. **Question:** 3.4.3.5 - Is the vendor responsible for the BI reports required for the Rate Review Process Report, or does the MHCC only need the related data marts built and it will run the aggregations and metrics calculations in a self-service manner?

**Answer:** The Offeror is required to build the data marts for the Rate Review Process Report.

52. **Question:** 3.4.3.6 BI Portal - It is not 100% clear if the vendor needs to provide prebuilt standard report(s) and dashboard(s) for cost, utilization, quality, etc., or if MHCC only requires the BI technology pointed to the data marts?

**Answer:** The requirement is that the BI tool be pointed to data marts. MHCC is open to discussions about additions and enhancements, including standard reports and dashboards.



53. **Question:** 3.4.3.1.5.a. - How many ad-hoc targeted data marts does the state expect users will be creating over the life of the contract?

**Answer:** The Offeror should state its assumptions in its bid narrative about the number of targeted ad-hoc data marts that users will create over the life of the contract.

54. **Question:** 3.4.3.1.5.a. - What data storage size (in TB) should be assumed for this data marts support?

**Answer:** The Offeror should state its assumptions in its bid narrative.

55. **Question:** User Concurrency Over Time - The state references 10 concurrent users on page 60. However, the growth over time is not addressed. Can the state estimate the maximum number of concurrent users focused on analytics on this solution during each year of the project so we can see the anticipated growth over the life of the entire project?

**Answer:** The Offeror should provide estimates for 10 concurrent direct users in its bid as well as its assumptions regarding the number of public access users that can be accommodated.

56. **Question:** Inventory of Source Systems and Tables for Analytics - Can the State provide an inventory of source systems and tables to include in this solution, e.g. the estimated number of data elements (i.e., columns), any complex data transformations required, update frequency, update volume, current size (storage), and required/desired history load?

**Answer:** An RFP amendment will be posted by close of business on Tuesday, December 29 containing information about accessing a reading library. Prospective bidders are advised to monitor this website for ongoing updates and amendments:

[MHCC.Maryland.Gov\\_Procurement](http://www.mhcc.maryland.gov/Procurement). Also refer to the Data Submission Guide at <http://www.mhcc.maryland.gov/mcdb.html>.

57. **Question:** Time Service Level Goals - Can the state stipulate an acceptable time for system response to a user request for information?

**Answer:** Section 3.9.1.6.C. states that "Contractor shall ensure that the Portal, Data Warehouse and data access environment responds to user queries within five seconds (as measured by query run times)."

58. **Question:** Page 64, Section 3.4.6 - Are the Medicare and Medicaid feeds (which are received annually) expected to be processed in the next regular quarterly cycle following receipt – or 45-days after receipt irrespective of quarterly processing schedule (3.4.6)?

**Answer:** Medicare and Medicaid files should be processed within 45 days of receipt.

59. **Question:** Are the SLA credits assessed up to 10% of the maximum of the invoice charges?

**Answer:** Please see Section 3.9.1.6: In no event shall the aggregate of all SLA credits paid to the State in any quarter exceed 10% of the Invoiced Charges.

60. **Question:** Data Governance Policy - Governance is references on pages 81 & 203. Does the State have a Data Governance policy in place to manage the various agencies that will be providing and using the data involved in this project? If so, can you please provide us with a copy of it?

**Answer:** MHCC will continue to manage data use agreements with other state agencies.

61. **Question:** Mainframe Connectivity - a. Please stipulate that it should be with either FICON or ESCON?

**Answer:** This question references information in Attachment Q, Labor Categories, containing position descriptions that are provided as a reference for Offerors when completing their bids. Offerors should review Section 3.4 for information about the solution requirements for this project.

62. **Question:** Mainframe Connectivity - b. If the state is planning to host the solution, what is the approximate distance between each mainframe and the intended solution platform's location? If the state won't be hosting this solution, please provide the approximate location (city will be fine) so we can plan telecommunications.

**Answer:** This question references information in Attachment Q, Labor categories, containing position descriptions that are provided as a reference for Offerors when completing their bids. Offerors should review Section 3.4 for information about the solution requirements for this project.

63. **Question:** Mainframe Connectivity - c. What are the manufacturer and model of the mainframe?

**Answer:** This question references information in Attachment Q, Labor categories, containing position descriptions that are provided as a reference for Offerors when completing their bids. Offerors should review Section 3.4 for information about the solution requirements for this project.

64. **Question:** Mainframe Connectivity - The state references mainframe experience on page 211. Will the state need direct connectivity between their mainframe or mainframes and this solution? If yes, then for each mainframe:

**Answer:** This question references information in Attachment Q, Labor categories, containing position descriptions that are provided as a reference for Offerors when completing their bids. Offerors should review Section 3.4 for information about the solution requirements for this project.

65. **Question:** Due Date - Can the state extend the RFP response submission date in order to allow more time to develop and submit a bid? Given the open planning issues which need to be settled, we would suggest an additional 6-8 weeks.

**Answer:** MHCC recognizes that the timeline for this procurement is aggressive but is committed to meeting state-required reporting deadlines that have been included in this scope of work.

66. **Question:** 3.3.5.2.B. - Would the state provide guidance on how contractors should present alternative backup options with tiered pricing in their finance proposal sheet?

**Answer:** The state will evaluate alternate backup options submitted by contractors, including tiered pricing options.

67. **Question:** Can you comment on the general quality of the files?

**Answer:** MHCC seeks a Contractor that will contribute significant subject matter expertise to developing, implementing and operating robust, credible data files to help the state achieve health system monitoring and analytic goals.

68. **Question:** Host vs. Expand Current System - The state asks for hosting in several areas of the RFP. Is the state willing to consider an alternative which would expand a currently-installed and production-operational data warehouse platform?

**Answer:** The Offeror should fully describe its proposed solution and its advantages to MHCC.

69. **Question:** Are there any tasks contained in this SOW that differ from the tasks for the current incumbent contract. Conversely are there any tasks that were contained in the incumbent contract, which are not included in this RFP?

**Answer:** The Offeror should fully describe its proposed solution and its advantages to MHCC.

70. **Question:** Page 79, Section 4.2.2.3 - Is the eMM number the six digit ID found on the eMM procurement system?

**Answer:** Yes, this number should be generated and listed in eMM as your Vendor ID, after your firm is registered using the following link <https://emaryland.buyspeed.com>

71. **Question:** Dev-QA-UAT-and-Prod Environments - The state references four environments on page 43: development, quality assurance, user acceptance testing, and production. Does the state require four physically separate data warehouse database platforms for each of these environments, or will a smaller number of physically separate database platform with multiple data sets & databases suffice (e.g. one set of tables for production, one set of tables for development, etc., all on the same physical platform)?

**Answer:** MHCC seeks separate instances of the database that underpins the portal for each environment. Additionally, section 3.5.6 specifies that there must be separate production, test and training environments.

72. **Question:** 3.3.5.2.B. - For Backup retention, is there an alternate tiered approach that the state would entertain in lieu of the existing retention requirement that amounts to 52 weekly copies and 12x5=60 monthly full copies of all 17 TB production storage totaling backup storage in excess of 1 Petabytes (PB).

**Answer:** The State is open to receive and evaluate alternate backup and retention options as long as the basic requirements as stated in the RFP are satisfied. However, once monthly backups are done, the previous four weeks can be discarded. The state expects retention of a rolling 12-months of monthly backups and all annual backups.

73. **Question:** Page 62, Section 3.4.3.6.e - Does Business Intelligence Portal solution need to support Tableau as a plug-in or simply co-host it in the same environment (3.4.3.6.e)?

**Answer:** The data warehouse needs to be available to Tableau or other BI tool proposed.

74. **Question:** Page 32, Section 1.38 - Given the requirements for data intake and reporting will a HIPAA Business Associate Agreement be required for the successful vendor?

**Answer:** No, a Business Associate Agreement will not be required, but the Contractor shall conform to guidance in the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules.

75. **Question:** Why are the liquidated damages not to be considered as a penalty to the contractor?

**Answer:** Liquidated damages are intended to serve as compensation to the State for actual damages that may occur as a result of a breach. They are not intended as punishment to the contractor for the breach. In fact, such penalties are not enforceable.

76. **Question:** How are damages caused by the contractor determined? Is there a cap on the amount of damages that can be assessed against the contractor?

**Answer:** The manner of calculating liquidated damages is adequately described in the contract. If you would like to request clarification about a specific item, we are willing to reply.

77. **Question:** Can a Veteran Owned Small Business be utilized to fulfill both the MBE and VSBE goals. For example, If a VSBE/MBE was awarded 17% of the work, would that fulfill both requirements?

**Answer:** Yes, the same criteria applies to both the MBE and VSBE firm: they must be certified/verified at the time of submission and they must be certified/verified in the category of work that they are named to perform. If a firm that's both a certificated MBE and a verified VSBE is named to meet BOTH goals. Example: if there is a 10% MBE goal and a 5% VSBE goal, then they would be expected to perform 15% of the contract value.

